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area. Kiangsu alone produced before the war about 30 per cent of China's total annual cotton crop. Shanghai's textile mills at this period consumed an annual average of about 3,800,000 piculs of raw cotton (one picul equals 133 pounds), of which it is estimated that 2,000,000 came from Kiangsu, 500,000 from Hankow, 500,000 from Tientsin by sea, and 800,000 from foreign ports, principally from the United States.[11] The foreign cotton imports were predominantly of long-staple varieties for the weaving of finer-count cloth for which the native short-staple Chinese cotton was not suitable. During the 1930's considerable progress was made in growing long-staple cotton in China from American seeds, including that grown in the Kiangsu area, so that by 1936 foreign cotton imports to Shanghai were only half of what they had been in 1920.[12] The ground thus gained was largely lost during the war years, but reports from China since 1946 indicate that self-sufficiency in all types of cotton is now again within reach, with Kiangsu still the leading producer.[13]

The major silk-producing regions of China are also near at hand. The delta areas of Kiangsu and Chekiang accounted for about half of the total Chinese production of raw silk in the 1920's and 1930's, as they had during most of the nineteenth century, and Shanghai remained the primary silk market of China. When silk-reeling, spinning, and weaving in the delta area became largely concentrated in factories after about 1910, rather than being done as before on a domestic basis, it was logical that the industry should center in Shanghai, as well as in the nearby cities of Soochow, Wusih, and Hangchow.

The rest of the textile industry is less closely related to the sources of its raw materials. About three-quarters of the raw wool used in Shanghai factories before the war came from the grazing areas of northwest China via Tientsin, by sea and rail. Less than one-tenth came from Kiangsu, and it was mainly "dead" wool of poor quality shorn from dead sheep and goats. The remainder was supplied largely from central China, via Hankow, by Yangtze steamer.[14] Ramie and hemp for Shanghai manufacturing came primarily from Hankow, in the center of the chief producing areas for both crops. Most of the jute consumed in Shanghai was imported from India.